

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of image processing a digital still image, comprising the steps of:
 - a) providing the digital still image;
 - b) identifying the figure in the digital still image to be animated;
 - c) generating an animation model of the figure;
 - d) substituting the animation model for the figure in the digital still image;
 - e) detecting an area of missing detail in the digital still image resulting from the substitution;
 - f) identifying information in the digital still image adjacent the area of missing detail;
 - g) replicating the identified information; and
 - h) inserting the replicated identified information into the area of missing detail to generate an animated image.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of blurring the replicated identified information.

3. A method of image processing a digital still image to generate a plurality of animated images, comprising the steps of:

- a) providing the digital still image;
- b) identifying the figure in the digital still image to be animated;
- c) generating an animation model of the figure;
- d) substituting the animation model for the figure in the digital still image;
- e) detecting an area of missing detail in the digital still image resulting from the substitution;
- f) identifying information in the digital still image adjacent the area of missing detail;
- g) replicating the identified information;

h) inserting the replicated identified information into the area of missing detail to generate a first animated image; and

i) defining the first animated image to be the digital still image and generating a second animated image by repeating the steps of a) through h).

4. The method of Claim 3, further comprising the step of blurring the replicated identified information.

5. A method of image processing a digital still image to generate a plurality of animated images, comprising the steps of:

- a) setting a counter n equal to 1;
- b) providing a digital still image I(n);
- c) identifying a figure F(n) in the image I(n) to be animated;
- d) extracting the figure F(n) from the image I(n);
- e) generating an animation model F(n+1) from the figure F(n);
- f) substituting the animation model F(n+1) for the figure F(n) in the image I(n);
- g) detecting a difference area D(F(n);F(n+1)) between the animation model F(n+1) and the figure F(n);
- h) identifying information in the image I(n) adjacent the difference area D(F(n);F(n+1));
- i) replicating the identified information;
- j) inserting the replicated identified information into the difference area D(F(n);F(n+1)) to generate an animated image I(n+1); and
- k) repeating steps c) through j) to generate a plurality of animated images.

6. The method of Claim 5, further comprising the step of blurring the replicated identified information.

7. A method of image processing a digital still image to generate an animated digital still image, comprising the steps of:

- a) providing the digital still image;
- b) identifying the figure in the digital still image to be animated;
- c) generating an animation model of the figure;
- d) substituting the animation model for the figure in the digital still image;
- e) determining a difference area in the digital still image resulting from the substitution;
- f) identifying information in the digital still image adjacent the difference area;
- g) replicating the identified information; and
- h) inserting the replicated identified information into the difference area to generate the animated digital still image.

8. An imaging system, comprising:
- an image capture device providing a digital still image;
 - means for extracting a figure from the digital still image to generate a difference image comprised of a background section and an extraction section;
 - means for animating the figure to generate an animation model;
 - means for substituting the animation model in the difference image;
 - means for detecting an area of missing detail in the difference image resulting from the substitution;
 - means for identifying information in the difference image adjacent the area of missing detail;
 - means for replicating the identified information; and
 - means for inserting the replicated identified information into the area of missing detail to generate an animated digital still image.

9. The imaging system of Claim 8, further comprising means for blurring the replicated identified information.